

Amendments To The Specification:

Please delete existing paragraph [0021] that begins with "The rear portion 16 of the device..."

Please add the following new paragraph [0021.1] after existing paragraph [0021]:

[0021.1] The rear portion 16 of the device 10 includes a bottom end portion 26 and a top end portion 28 that is offset a substantial distance from the bottom end portion 26. The bottom end portion 26 preferably has a hand attachment portion 22 secured thereto. In this regard, it is understood that the top end portion 28 can be utilized for blocking a ball that would otherwise sail substantially beyond a user's reach.

Please add the following new paragraph [0021.2] after new paragraph [0021.1]:

[0021.2] Specifically, as shown in Figures 1 and 3, the hand attachment portion 22 has a front palm side that is coupled to the bottom end portion 26 of the device 10. The hand attachment portion 22 is intended to receive a user's hand for allowing the user to move the blocking device 10 as if it were an extension of the user's hand. The hand attachment portion 22 is sized smaller than the front portion 14 and covers a substantial portion of the user's hand to maintain the hand in a generally fixed position on the device 10. Furthermore, the hand attachment portion 22 is preferably configured in the shape of a glove with a plurality of sleeves 24 for receiving the user's fingers. However, a variety of other configurations may be utilized including a mitten, straps, elastic band, or the like. The hand attachment portion 22 is preferably sewn onto or otherwise mounted to the rear portion 16. Alternatively, it may be sewn, glued or otherwise attached to the outer cover 20. As shown, in the glove configuration, the index finger may be at least partially exposed.

Please add the following new paragraph [0021.3] after new paragraph [0021.2]:

[0021.3] With attention to Figures 2 and 4, one skilled in the art will understand that the top end portion 28 is beneficial for decreasing a rotational force applied on the user's wrist and minimizing injuries associated therewith.

Please add the following new paragraph [0021.4] after new paragraph [0021.3]:

[0021.4] Specifically, referring to Figure 2, it will be appreciated that the device 10 has a construction for applying the rotational force on the user's wrist. Namely, the top end portion 28 is utilized for receiving the force of a ball impacted generally perpendicularly thereon. One skilled in the art will understand that this force is transmitted through the device 10 to the user's hand so as to produce the rotational force on the user's wrist. As is known in the art, this rotational force is a torque to the extent that it tends to cause the user's hand to rotate rearwardly about her wrist. In addition, one skilled in the art will also understand that the rotational force can be applied to the user's wrist without causing her hand to actually rotate when the user applies a sufficient force for opposing the rotational force and decreasing the net force on her hand to zero.

Please add the following new paragraph [0021.5] after new paragraph [0021.4]:

[0021.5] Further, as best shown in Figure 4, the top end portion 28 decreases the amount of rotational force on the user's wrist. Specifically, the top end portion 28 includes the inner absorbing portion 12, which is sufficiently deformable for bending the top end portion 28 substantially rearwardly and absorbing some of the force of the ball. In this way, the top end portion 28 decreases the amount of force transmitted through the device 10 thereby minimizing the rotational force on the user's wrist. This feature is beneficial for minimizing injuries to the user's wrist.

Please add the following new paragraph [0021.6] after new paragraph [0021.5]:

[0021.6] For example, the top end portion 28 can sufficiently decrease the rotational force for allowing the user to hold her hand in a substantially fixed position. It is understood that minimizing repeated wrist movement can decrease the risk of injuries thereto. By way of another example, one skilled in the art will also understand that this construction gradually applies the rotational force to the user's wrist so as to minimize the shock or harshness of impact thereon. However, it is understood that decreasing the amount of rotational force can prevent various other injuries. It will also be appreciated that this construction is beneficial for minimizing the amount of energy a user expends to block a ball.